

WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS

NO. 2595

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."
1 Corinthians 11:26*

THERE is something very tender about the supper which Christ has instituted, for it very specially concerns Himself. Other things set forth the truths which He taught, or the blessings which He purchased, or the duties which He enjoined, but this supper has mainly to do with our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

True, as we think and speak of it, we shall learn precious doctrine, and we shall be incited to gracious practice, but the central thought at this table is concerning our Lord Himself, and that part of Himself which it is most easy for us to realize—His flesh, with which He touches us so tenderly, making Himself bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—His blood, which makes Him so near akin to us—

"In ties of blood with sinners one."

It is very blessed not only to be reminded of Christ, but of that part of Christ to which we can most readily come. His Godhead is beyond us, but His manhood is near to us, and I think that the tenderness of this supper is greatly increased by the fact that it celebrates our Lord's death.

If anything concerning our departed friends specially touches our heart, it is their death. How lovingly we remember their last moments! Their final utterance sounds to us like the language of prophets, words that were commonplace before become golden when spoken to us by loved ones as they leave us. The tear comes readily enough to the eye, and the heart beats faster than usual when we begin to remember our well-beloved friends, and to remember them in the solemn moment of their death.

At this supper, we shall not forget that our blessed Master is exalted, and sits at the right hand of God, and we shall there be also forcibly reminded that He is coming a second time in the clouds of heaven with all the pomp and glory of His Father's court, yet the main intent of our gathering around this table is to show forth His death. That is the principal point, therefore beloved, collect all your thoughts into one thought, all your contemplations into one contemplation, and lay the whole at the cross-foot as you "eat this bread, and drink this cup."

To me, it is an exceedingly tender recollection that you and I should be called upon to keep up this memorial as if our Lord gave us this supper with the commission that each one of us should see to it that His memory was always green—I was about to say, to keep His grave in order, but it is not so, He is not here, for He is risen—but at least, we are to keep the letters upon this monument always deeply carved and legible, showing forth His death that everyone who passes by—that everyone who rambles into the cemetery where men have slept, and pauses at this open tomb, and asks who once slept here—may know from us that it was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of man, our dear and ever-to-be-adored Savior, who died, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

You see, then, that this supper concerns our Lord Jesus, and it especially concerns His death, and you have to attend to this ordinance, and so to freshen up the memorials of the departed One. Do you not think that it will help you to do it if you remember that He has not gone far away? Ere I rose to speak to you, I thought within myself that I could hear His footfall upon this platform, and I opened my eyes after

my brother's prayer almost expecting to see the Master here. He is not here in that sense, though, if I said that He is here, who would dare to contradict me? He has so gone away as to be still present, and He is still present so as to be absent. Make what you can of that riddle, many of you understand the blessed paradox.

We have not lost our Lord's spiritual presence, but we are looking for His bodily presence, and I think, He is so near already that, if He were suddenly to appear in our midst, it would be no surprise to us, and we would all clap our hands and say, "Welcome, You long-expected One! We knew that You would come, and we felt the influence of Your presence, the coming event had cast its brightness upon us. We knew that You were on the way, for our hearts burned within us, and we felt You coming nearer, and the days of Your glory dawning."

Very well then, bearing all this in mind, we have now to consider what the apostle said about this supper, and first, I shall ask you to think of *the backward look of this ordinance*, "Ye do shew the Lord's death." Secondly, I shall ask you to listen to *the present voice of this ordinance*, to try to hear what it now whispers in our ear, and then, thirdly, I shall speak of *the prophetic glance of this ordinance*, since the text tells us that in it we "do shew the Lord's death till he come," so there is in the ordinance a glimpse at Christ's coming glory, a gleam of that long-expected light.

I. First then, let us think of THE BACKWARD LOOK OF THIS ORDINANCE.

It was intended to be the memorial of the great event of Christ's life, and I think you will all agree with me that it is *a most effectual memorial*. It has been said by men well competent to judge, that there is no better memorial of an event than the celebration of some such festival as this. If you write the record of it in a book, the book may be placed upon a shelf, and perhaps remain unread, or it may be completely destroyed so that not a copy of it remains.

If you set up a stone or brazen pillar, and engrave upon it some words by way of memorial, that pillar may be turned to some other use, and the original intention of its erection may be wholly forgotten. I have seen marble columns, recording Roman triumphs, built into the houses of Italian peasants, and you may have seen the same. Painted windows are broken, and even solid brass wears away. How can you keep a thing upon the tablets of man's memory? Here is a nine days' wonder—will it last for nine centuries even in old worm-eaten books, or engrossed on parchment? Will not the Record Office be invaded by rats? Has it not often happened so, and the best preserved documents have perished?

But institute a supper like this, so that, wherever the followers of Christ meet together, a piece of bread and a little wine may suffice them immediately to show forth Christ's death, and you have instituted a memorial which will outlast your granite, and laugh to scorn memorials of brass. Speak of imperishable marble? Here you have something far more enduring, and now, for nearly nineteen centuries has the church of God kept alive the memory of Christ's death by this sacred feast. In the wisdom of Christ, it was given to us, let us not grow so wise—or rather so foolish—as to neglect it.

In looking back from this ordinance, we see it to be not only a most effectual memorial, but also *a most instructive symbol*. Of what does this supper consist? Simply of bread and wine. The bread must be broken, and what better emblem of suffering can you have than that? The bread itself, if rightly viewed, appears to be a mass of suffering.

The seed is cast into the ground which has been cut up by the sharp plow. It lies buried for a while in the cold clay. When it rises, it has to endure first the frost and all the trials of the wintry weather, and then the heat of summer. And when it ripens, it is cut down with a sharp sickle. The sheaves press upon one another, they are thrown upon the barn floor, and the precious grain is threshed out by severe beating. Next, it must be taken to the mill, to be crushed between great stones, and when it is utterly bruised into fine flour, it must be kneaded, and made into dough.

Then it must be baked in the oven, and it has not finished its long process of suffering till, at last, it is laid upon the table, and broken in pieces, and then further broken with the teeth in order to enter into men, and become their nourishment. So that the broken bread is an admirable emblem of that precious

body of our Lord Jesus Christ into which all sorts of griefs were condensed till the "Man of sorrows" was utterly consumed by them.

And look too, at the wine in the cup. Does not that also indicate pain and suffering? Have you ever seen the vine—especially in the wine producing countries—how it is cut down till, in the winter, it seems to be nothing but an old dead stump? How sharply do they prune it, and cut it back if it is a good vine! And when at last it bears its clusters, the grapes are gathered, and thrown into the winepress, and crushed beneath the trampling feet of the laborers, and the freely flowing juice of the grape is the picture of Christ's sacrifice—the yielding up of His life—the pouring out of the precious blood of Jesus.

Now take the two emblems separately, you cannot make the Lord's supper with the two joined together. You must have them both, but you must have them apart, for when the blood is separated from the flesh, then death ensues. So on the table, you have not only two tokens of intense suffering, but you have in the two separate from each other a most marked and instructive symbol of death. This is just what the Lord intended that it should be, and when we come here, we can hardly keep from remembering His death, for it is so clearly set forth before us.

I do not know what the mass sets forth, with all its mummery and mockery, what that can have to do with Christ, I cannot tell. But here you have as Christ instituted the ordinance, a fair token and symbol of His broken body, and of His shed blood, and therefore of His death.

You have also in this supper, something more than this, and that is, *a most pleasing and happy exhibition of the result of that death*. Our Divine Master died. "Woe, woe," we cry, "that heaven's darling should lie dead in the tomb!" Yes, but look what comes out of His death. Men are now called to feast with God. Our Lord Jesus, by His death, has provided this sacred viand upon which hungry souls may feed even to the full, and they are invited to come and take of that which is provided—the good cheer of heaven, the bread that strengthens man's heart, and that wine which safely makes glad his spirit.

Yes, man is not now an outcast, no longer does he wish for the swine's husks to fill his belly, even if they cannot satisfy it, but he sits at the table, and a feast of fat things is prepared for him—necessaries and dainties—bread and wine provided for him in Christ. And that is plainly set forth to all who care to see it in this supper. Nor is this all.

There is, in this supper, *a personal and yet united confession and testimony to Christ*. It might have seemed difficult to blend these two, for religion is a personal matter. If Christ is to save me, I must personally feed upon Him, and yet, religion is also a social matter. If Christ is to save me, it must be in connection with the whole of His church which He has redeemed with His most precious blood.

Now here, at the table, eating is an individual act, no man can eat or drink for his fellow men, and thus, each man sets forth that he does, from his own heart, of his own accord, by his own faith, receive Christ to be his Savior. Yet inasmuch as no one man alone can celebrate the Lord's supper, but there must be two or three at the least, so the great fact is set forth that we are not saved alone, but saved as members of one body—the church of God which He has redeemed at so great a cost.

See then, how the unit is lost in the mass, nay, not lost, it is there still, and yet it is no longer separate, and this supper sets forth all that. Come, therefore, beloved, to this ordinance which has such richness of meaning in it that the few words I have spoken do but touch the surface of the subject. Come, I say, and think of your Beloved.

He has died—He has died for you, that dear body of His, black and blue with the cruel stripes, and crimson with its own blood—that life poured forth, though it was for all His people, yet was especially for you, my brother—for you, my sister. You did not see Christ die, but if your faith is in a right condition, you may see Him die, as it were, emblematically, you may see His death vividly set forth, after a striking fashion, in those emblems on the table. God give you grace to see it, and in response, to love Him more who died on Calvary for you!

Oh, if you had seen Him die, the horror of that scene would have overcome you, and instead of sweet thoughts of devotion, as you fancy might be the case, you would probably have been overwhelmed with terror. But now, as through a glass, in the emblems of the body and the blood of

Christ, you may see Him under a softer light. The horror may not oppress you, but you may sit in that pew, and see Him who died for you—see Him with a holy joy that He could have loved you and given Himself for you. It is you who are to think of Him, it is you who are to discern the Lord's body, it is you who are to eat and drink worthily, with all your heart, setting forth Christ's death, it is you who are to represent Him—you, with all your brothers and sisters, but you none the less as truly as if you were alone. “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do shew the Lord's death”

That is the backward look of this ordinance, may God's Spirit enable you to give that look at this moment!

II. And now, dear friends, secondly and briefly, bow your ear a little, and listen to THE PRESENT VOICE OF THIS ORDINANCE TO YOU. What does it say at this hour?

It says to me—and my heart shall hear it—that *Christ's death must still be kept to the front*. I am to “shew the Lord's death till He comes.” Whatever I forget, I am to remember that, and this supper is instituted on purpose that I may do so. O my heart, you must keep a dying Christ always before you! Christ to the front for myself! Christ to the front in my teaching! Christ to the front in all my prayers! Christ to the front everywhere! O memory, leave no other name but His recorded on my heart! Whatever else may come or may go, my heart, you are told that you must still remember His death, and keep it right in the forefront of everything!

But over the table I hear a whisper come, “*Thou dost still need this memorial.*” We are not only to remember Christ, we are to “do this” in remembrance of Him. This ordinance is intended to help our memory. Is it possible that we can forget our Lord's death? Ah! if it had not been possible, and probable, that we should forget it, there would have been no need of this supper, but it is ordained because we are naturally forgetful, we are ungracious enough to let even the best things slip.

We forget not our earthly beloved ones who have been taken from us, the dear infant child has its name inscribed on the tablets of its mother's heart, the husband has not forgotten his spouse, but yet we grow unmindful of our Lord, and hence He left us this sweet forget-me-not. He says to us, as it were, “No, My beloved, I will not let you forget Me, I will give you something that shall frequently remind you of Me. Come often to My table, and there constantly think of Me afresh and anew.”

What else does this ordinance say? It says, “*In this supper, I have fellowship with the centuries that have gone before, and with those which will follow.*” When our Lord said to His first disciples, “This do in remembrance of me,” He really gave that command to each one of us who believe in Him, but He also gave it to all the saints who have gone before us, and to all who will come after us. Does it not charm you to think that you are eating as Paul did, and as James and John did—that you are in the fellowship of the martyrs and confessors, the Fathers and the Reformers, and that we, in this ordinance, enter into the great cloud of witnesses, and take our part with them?

I look upon this supper—which some seem to regard as an unimportant ceremony—as a thing most august and sacred, seeing how many hands have combined to break this bread and how many lips have partaken of this cup. So will it be in the future when you and I sleep with our fathers. If Christ shall not come for a long, long while, this ordinance will still be observed by the faithful. If His coming should be delayed for ten thousand years—which God forbid!—yet still this supper table would be spread, and loving hearts would gather around it to keep this memorial alive on the earth “till he come.”

Do you see what this communion really is? It is a bridge of diamonds, it springs from our Lord's death with one grand arch, and it spans the intervening space “till he come.” Blessed are they that are treading that glorious bridge, and marching on, washed in the blood of His death, till they shall wear the white robes of His victory in the day of His appearing.

I think I hear another voice coming out of the depth of the cup. It says, “*He will come. He will come.*” And oh! blessed assurance, He must keep His tryst, this supper is His pledge, and it would be a cruel mockery of us if He never came. He *must* come.

My brothers, it is nearly nineteen centuries since Jesus said to His disciples, “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go

and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also," and He will come. Do not grow weary, or if you do faint with the long watching and waiting, do not grow doubtful. He will come.

Your fathers thought that He would come in their time. Some of them fancied themselves very wise, and tried to interpret the prophecies which never will be explained until they are fulfilled, and they lost themselves in endless mazes of conjecture. Do not so, but still, do not fling away your faith because you cast aside your speculation.

Believe, and hope, and patiently wait, and look each day for the returning Christ, for He may come ere strikes tomorrow's clock at noon, He may come ere the midnight hour shall fall upon the hush of this great city. Ere yet the word I am speaking shall quit these lips, and reach your ears, He may appear, for "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven." But it is ours to stand watching, and waiting, and hoping, for this supper tells us that He will surely come again.

One more message comes to me from this broken bread, and that is, that *it is His first coming that makes us ready for the second*. Is it not so? "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." You keep before your mind's eye the fact that He came once to die, in order that you may feel joy in the fact that He is coming again, not to die, but to reign forever and ever. I think I hear the countless trumpets, and see the dead rising, and behold the King attended by ten thousand times ten thousand kings.

Kings, did I call them? They seem to me like stars, no, like suns, for "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Their Lord has come, and His saints are gathered to Him. Caught up into the clouds, the living ones are with Him, and the dead have risen and joined them.

Oh, the splendor of that tremendous day! Though we know not when that day shall be, we know that He will come, the angels gave the promise to the men of Galilee, and it shall be fulfilled, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." In the clouds of heaven, with great pomp, will He appear, and as we come to this communion table, we must think of that glorious appearing of our Lord.

III. Now, lastly, I have to speak about THE PROPHETIC GLANCE OF THIS ORDINANCE.

I have partly referred to that already, for one thought in our text blends with another.

The prophetic glance reveals to us the fact that *Christ will come again*. We are to celebrate this supper "till he come." Then, He will come. Fall not asleep, you virgins, for at midnight the cry shall be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." O you who serve Him, begin not to beat your fellow servants, and to be drunken, for He will come, and He may soon be here! By this supper are we assured that He will come.

"But," perhaps you say, "His saints have waited for Him nearly two thousand years." What is that? Two thousand years? Think of those who waited four thousand years before Christ came here to die. Now, I reckon that to wait two thousand years for our Lord's Second Advent is a trifle compared with waiting four thousand years for His First Advent, for you see, on that first coming depended the salvation of all His people. The ancients might well ask, "Will He come to die?"

O my brothers, if Abraham and the patriarchs and the prophets had been dubious about His coming to bleed and die, I should not so much have wondered. Four thousand years passed, and yet He had not come, might not each man have put his hands upon his loins for fear that he would not come—that there would be no redemption—no pouring out of the great price by which men should be set free?

Four thousand years to wait for that! Why, now, if we have to wait forty thousand years for His Second Advent, it need not be such an anxious time of waiting, because we may expect Him to come in His glory, we may expect Him to come to be admired in all them that believe, we may expect Him to come to reign forever and ever. We may be sure that He who slew the dragon will come to divide the spoil, He that routed death and hell will come to lead captivity captive, and to reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords. You are not waiting in the night, for the Day Star has risen. You are not waiting in the thick darkness, the dawn has broken upon you. Christ has appeared once, you are

redeemed by His blood, you are children of the living God. Patiently wait then, for He will most surely come, and every hour brings Him nearer.

What does this ordinance further say to me? Why surely, that *Christ's coming will be better than ordinances*. If when He comes, there will be no more Lord's suppers as we observe them now, and if it be, as it certainly is, a rule of the kingdom to always go from good to better, and from better to best—as God never brings forth the best wine first, and afterwards that which is worse, but it is always something better, and better, and better, then what must Christ's coming be?

Brethren, communion with Christ in the ordinances is very very sweet. Oh, sometimes, we have had such pleasure, such delight, such rapture, at the table of our Lord, that we could hardly have endured any more! At such times, I have sympathized a little with Peter when he wished to build three tabernacles, and to remain on the Mount of Transfiguration. It is very easy to get up to a great height, but alas! we soon get down again.

I wish that we could always do, in spiritual things, what I have done today in temporal things, I am so lame, and it was so great a pain for me to get up here this morning, that I said, "God willing, if I once get up to my platform, and preach, I will not go down again till I have preached the evening sermon," so I have remained upstairs all the day. When I was once up, I kept up. Now mind you do that in spiritual things.

You know, if you go down, you lame folk, you may not be able to get up again, so stop up when you are up, and try to continue enjoying the presence of your Lord and Master. But if Lord's suppers and communions with Christ in outward ordinances are so sweet, and we are to go on to something even better when the Lord Himself comes, then what excessive delight it will be!

Oh, to catch a glimpse of Him! If the feet of His servants upon the mountains are beautiful, what must His own dear face be when He shall be down in the valleys among us? Oh, if the sound of His Gospel be as silver bells, what shall be the utterances of His own dear lips when His words shall be as lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh?

Ah, me! there is something coming for you, believer, of which you know but little as yet. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into thy heart to know them, yet God hath revealed them to thee by His Spirit. You know them to some extent, but not wholly as yet, for here we see in part, and understand only in part, but there we shall know even as we are known.

Be of good comfort, brothers and sisters, get all the sweetness you can out of this supper while it lasts, but do not forget that there is something better than this yet to be revealed. This ordinance is only like a candle, or a little star, when Christ comes, you will not need it, for He is the sun.

Further, does not this supper, as it looks into the future, tell us that *the time is coming when we shall be rid of all infirmities*? Where is the need of this supper, but that we have such weak, frail memories? When it shall be taken away, it will be a token that we have good memories—memories that will miss nothing, but will hold by that which is good and blessed forever and forever. When this communion is no longer to be observed, it will be a happy sign that we have come to our perfection.

Here I will close, but I seem, in closing, as if I said to you, "This is a kind of preface." In my old Puritan books, I often find a preface written by some other hand to introduce the author's writing. Well, this is my preface to introduce you to this marvelous book—the communion, the feast of love, the Lord's supper. There is no teaching anywhere like it. I have been in the habit of coming to the Lord's table every first day of the week now for many years, I have never omitted it except when I have been too ill to move. Has it lost its freshness? Oh, dear, no! It is always a standing sermon, containing more teaching than volumes of men's sermons.

I do not know how they get on who have the communion only once a quarter or once a year. Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup." He should have said, "As seldom as ye drink it," according to the habit of some. There is no law about the frequency of its observance, except the sweet law of love which seems to say, "If this be a window where Christ looks out, then let me often approach

it. If this be a door through which He comes to my heart, then let me stand often at this door." "Often"—frequently—I think that at least once in the week it is well for us to come to the table of our Lord.

But there are some of you who have never come to this table yet. If you are not God's people, do not come, it would do you no good, it would rather do you harm to partake of these emblems. If you are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, do not come to His table, you would be hypocrites or intruders. But if you are sincere believers in Christ, how can you stop away? "This do," He says, "in remembrance of me."

Suppose your Lord were to come, and you had never done as He bade you? What would you say to Him? "It is such a simple matter," you say. Yes, in some senses it is, therefore, attend to it. If it were a matter in which your soul was concerned, so that you could not be saved without it, you say that you would attend to it. Would you? What wretched selfishness that would be! Is this all that you are to live for—that you may be saved? Are you really worth saving, such a miserable creature as you are? You seem to me to be too poor a thing to be worth redeeming.

If you are what you should be, you are believing in Christ, and you are saved, and now you say, "What can I do to show my gratitude to Him who has redeemed me?" Your heart expands, your spirit is enlarged, and if there is anything, little or great, which Christ commands as a proof of love to Him, you are delighted to do it. Do you not sometimes wish that He would give you something very hard to do—some difficult enterprise? Have you never envied the men that died for Him burning at the stake? Oh, it must have been grand thus to have proved one's love to Him! But He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and this is one of His commandments, "This do in remembrance of me."

Now come, dear friends, to this table of communion, seeking your Lord and Master, and may you find Him, and your hearts be made glad! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 26:17-30 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34

Matthew Chapter 26, Verses 17-19. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.*

Note their prompt obedience, "the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them." In this respect, they set an example we shall do well to follow.

20. *Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.*

This was the memorable night when the Jewish passover was to melt into the Lord's supper, just as the stars of the morning dissolve into the daylight.

21. *And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

This saying of our Lord must have startled His disciples, they had all made great professions of affection for Him, and for the most part those professions were true, but this sentence must have fallen like a bombshell among them, "One of you shall betray me."

22. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them, to say unto him, Lord, is it I?*

They did not doubt their Lord's declaration, they knew it must be true, and it produced in them deep emotion, "They were exceedingly sorrowful." It also wrought in them earnest self-examination, they did not any one of them say, "Lord, is it Judas?" Perhaps there was not one of them who could have thought so badly of Judas as to suppose that he would betray his Lord, they had such esteem for him that they had made him their treasurer.

It is always wise for us to turn the glass of critical examination upon ourselves, we cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren. Suspicion stings like an adder, but we may do ourselves great service

by suspecting and examining ourselves. Self-suspicion is near akin to humility and truthfulness, it was so with all but one of these disciples who began to say to Christ, "Lord, is it I?"

23-24. *And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.*

So, you see, dear friends, that a man may get very near to Christ—ay, he may even dip his morsel in the same dish with his Lord, and yet he may betray Him, even as Judas did. We may be very high in office, we may apparently be very useful—I have no doubt that Judas was exceedingly useful to the twelve and to the Master—and yet, for all that, we may betray Him. God grant that we never may! Far better that we perished at our birth than that we should live to be traitors to our Lord.

25. *Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.*

And if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of Judas ought to have driven him to repentance. A man may secretly indulge in his heart a wretched design, and when discovered, he may loathe it, but alas! there was nothing in Judas which could respond to the grace of God.

26-28. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Go into any Romish church, and watch the priest's performance at the altar, and see whether there is the least likeness between that mummery and this divinely appointed ordinance. I can hardly imagine two things which are so widely apart. How did the Lord's supper ever grow into the mass? It must have taken long years of moss and ivy and lichen and all kinds of clinging things to overgrow the original, natural column which the Savior set up, and to turn it into that mingle-mangle of which the Romanists and Ritualists think so much.

The only safe rule is to keep close to Scripture in everything, for if you add a little, somebody will add more, and if you alter one thing, the next person will alter another, and by and by, you will not know what the original was. I have seen a peasant, in Italy, wearing a coat of which I believe neither man nor angel could tell which was the material of which it was originally made, for it had been patched so often, and in like manner, if we did not know what was the original of the mass, it would be impossible for us now to tell, for it has been so patched and mended that it is not at all like the original. Let us, beloved, keep strictly to the letter of God's Word, and also to the spirit of it, lest we err from the truth as so many others have done.

29-30. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

Was it not brave of our dear Lord to join in singing a hymn at such a time as that, and under such circumstances? He knew that He was very soon to die, He was going out to His last dread conflict, yet He went to it singing a psalm. It was to His Passion that He was going—to Gethsemane's agony and bloody sweat, yet He led the way there with a sacred song upon His lips, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

Now let us turn to Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, at the eleventh chapter. We shall there see how this supper of the Lord had been changed, even in the few years since the death of the Master.

1 Corinthians Chapter 11. Verses 20-21. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

They seem to have brought their own provisions to the assembly, and to have made a feast thereof, and they even thought that was an observance of the Lord's supper. They differed in social position, and consequently, one had little and another much, and some even went to excess so that they were actually "drunken." Paul might well rebuke such unseemly conduct.

22. *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God,—*

"Do you think that, as a nominally Christian assembly, you are constituted merely that you may eat and drink? 'What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God,'"—

22. *And shame them that have not?*

"Making the poor who come to the gathering feel their poverty by observing the superiority of your provisions to their own."

22-23. *What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,—*

"And therefore you ought not to have gone astray. I told you how to observe this ordinance, so you have willfully erred. This is what I delivered unto you,"—

23-27. *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily,—*

That is, from wrong motives, without sincere faith and devotion to God,—

27-29. *Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

You notice that I introduced the word "condemnation" instead of "damnation." That word does not correctly give the meaning of the original, it is not damnation, but condemnation, or judgment, as is clear from that which follows.

30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

There is no doubt that God visited upon the Corinthians, in the way of chastisement, their want of reverence at His table, many were weak and sickly among them, and many died. They were not lost if they were believers in Christ, but the church at Corinth sustained a great loss through their departure, and I have no doubt that God still exercises a singular discipline over His own people. They that are without are, to a large extent, left to sin as they please, their punishment will fall upon them hereafter, but the child of God cannot be allowed to do so, and he shall be chastened for his sin.

The Lord still says to His spiritual Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." A father may let another man's child alone, but his own boy shall not transgress without smarting for it. Such conduct as is here described does not bring damnation, for there is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, but it does bring the chastening with which God visits His children when they walk contrary to Him.

31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

But when a church has lost its conscience, and gets into such a state as this Corinthian church fell into, then, as it does not judge itself, God judges it, and chastens it severely.

32. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

Perhaps somebody thought just now, "I do not want to be in the church of Christ if it gets special chastening." That is one among many reasons why I do want to be in the church of Christ, for "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

33-34. *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

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